

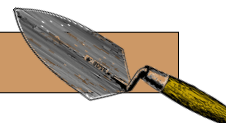


Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



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Valedictory from the Chair

As I hand over the Chair to Martin, I was asked to write a few words about the last five years and review what we have accomplished together.

First I would like to thank you all for your friendship and support over my time in the Chair and wish Martin every success in what is a challenging but very rewarding position. My best wishes also go to Richard Stevens (secretary), Mike Godfrey (treasurer) and Martin Railton, Heather Edwards, and Carol Dougherty re-elected to the committee. I will continue my association with the group serving as a committee member.

When elected chair in 2012, I asked for your support in continuing to provide an interesting and informative lecture programme with enjoyable summer events and an expansion of our research activities. With your help I feel that we have achieved these aims and would like to thank everyone involved in planning the various lecture and field programmes of the last few years. My particular thanks go to Carol who always came up with the unexpected and to the diligent work of Mike as Treasurer and Heather as Membership Secretary.

As our focus turned to research, we encouraged members to become more directly involved by organizing a number of workshops, including one on field walking, several on the identification of archaeological finds and most recently on palaeography, taught and guided by professionals. Perhaps the most exciting of our earlier field research was in 2013, when we excavated a bronze age barrow on Brakenber Moor, working with Altogether Archaeology, rather sadly for the last time.

In 2014 funding became scarce and we had to re-trench. However in spring 2015, Martin Railton wrote an article for the newsletter outlining his ideas for a very ambitious project. This was to become 'Dig Appleby'. His proposal was introduced to the members and the following months were taken up with detailed project planning, applying for funding and seeking sponsors. Here I must thank Martin Railton as the inspiration and driving force behind the project and Richard for all his work putting together our successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. During this time we continued to field walk and undertook two surveys. In June 2016, Appleby Archaeology launched Dig Appleby to a well attended open meeting. A very active few months have followed.

In the wider context, the newsletter is now available both in hard copy and digital format and the majority of members have elected to receive the latter. We now have a digital archive on our website including all the Newsletters published by the Group. Administration has been simplified by use of digital records and our public profile enhanced through the website, Facebook and a Blog. Our thanks go to Martin Joyce for all the work he did pulling us into the new digital world and editing the Newsletter over many years. David Boote will continue as Newsletter editor.

Finally I want to thank you again ... the members of the Appleby Archaeological Group ... for your support and friendship not only over the last five years but also over the preceding fourteen when I was secretary. I enjoyed it enormously and will now try to take a backseat!

Phyl Rouston

Botchergate Cemetery: life, death and commemoration in a Roman Frontier Town

The Appleby Archaeology Group welcomed Dr Richard Newman, a senior project manager from Wardell-Armstrong Archaeology to their December meeting. Richard presented the results of a Wardell-Armstrong archaeological excavation carried out in the William Street car park off Botchergate, Carlisle during 2015.



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This had revealed a well preserved Roman cremation cemetery containing some of the best-preserved pottery finds from the north of England.

Richard started with a brief overview of Carlisle's Roman history describing how the Romans built a fort in the first century on the site now occupied by the castle, as part of a string of defensive fortifications along Stanegate between the Tyne & Solway. A town grew up around the fort in the latter part of the first century and by the end of the second had been extended some distance to the south. A defensive wall was later built around the town, notably in a different place to the later medieval walls. At that time Botchergate was located outside the town and probably continued to be used for agriculture until as late as 1810 when the Citadel was reconstructed and it became part of the city suburbs. Fortunately the buildings constructed during this period had shallow foundations and the ground beneath was left undisturbed, preserving many Roman and medieval archaeological artefacts left from the past.

The Botchergate excavation highlighted several distinct phases of development. The earliest included a ditch, probably from the late first century. This was not aligned with any later features, so its use remains unknown. The second phase was marked by a formalised cemetery of the late first and very early second century, laid out in distinct plots. Analysis of the cremation remains of at least 46 individuals, found at this level, suggests they were predominantly adult civilians rather than soldiers, with one young child and a baby together with some 'token' internments, thought to represent people who had died and been buried elsewhere. Animal bones were present in almost all cremation urns, mainly of pig and sheep and well preserved pottery fragments were common throughout the site, reflecting the relatively undeveloped nature of the site.

By the mid second century, the cemetery had been abandoned and buried below a distinct clay layer of either Roman or Romano-British origin. Although this was followed by a further period of building typical of a Roman vicus, the site was finally abandoned in the early third century with no further signs of settlement until the twelfth or thirteenth century. After answering questions, Richard was warmly thanked for his most interesting talk.

AGM 12th Jan 2017

Following 12th January AGM, three members of the Appleby Archaeology Group talked about their archaeological and related achievements during 2016.

Carol Dougherty talked about the palaeography workshops she has organised as part of the Dig Appleby Project. Transcribing such documents is not an easy task but with enough effort Carol assured the enthusiastic but initially rather daunted participants that it could be done.

As a small but enthusiastic group gained confidence, some medieval documents specific to Appleby were photographed during a visit to the Cumbria Archives in Kendal in October. Carol reported that two people have now transcribed over 30 documents from the 1500s and 1600s – initially working on them independently and then comparing their efforts. This approach proved successful and we now have a fair representation of their content. Many surnames occurring in the documents are still very much evident in town and surrounding area. Some place names like Frieth Gate, Dribeck, Scattergait and Burelles look a little different but there is no mistaking the location. In another 1620 document there was a report of 6d paid for "*a planck that spaned the gibett*" – apparently needed for the local felons!

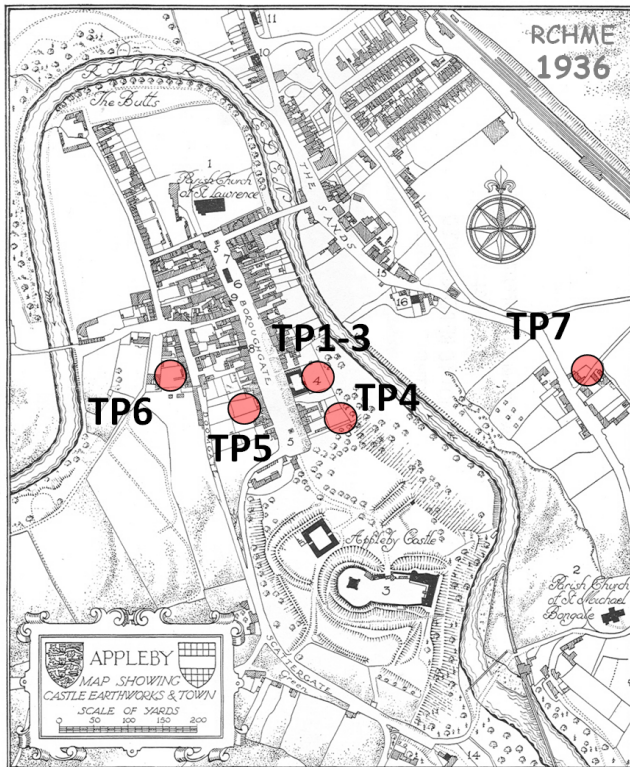
Chris Wilson then described how he had explored the ancient boundaries of Appleby – with some background research followed by a walk around them. His look back in time started with the current Ordnance Survey map. He then went to point out the boundaries on a 1843 tithe map and an earlier 1831/32 map drawn up a Robert Dawson, an officer in the Royal



Engineers. Appleby lost its two MPs at that time when the so-called 'pocket' boroughs were abolished - the only County Town in the country to suffer such ignominy. Interestingly both William Pitt the Younger and Earl Grey (yes, the tea man) had represented Appleby and both had become Prime Ministers. Further back in 1780, the commons to the north, south and east were incorporated within the town. Finally Chris showed a tracing of a map found in the Lonsdale archive he thought was from about 1524 with a town boundary extending as far as Colby, Hoff, Rutter Falls, Ormside, Coupland Beck and Aspland. He then went on to entertain the audience with a virtual tour using photographs taken on a walk around the boundary.

Martin Railton, the Group's Fieldwork specialist and professional archaeologist ended the evening with a progress report on the Group's Heritage Lottery

Funded 'Dig Appleby' Project launched in June 2016. Previous archaeological excavations of the historic core of the town have been very restricted because of the limited amount of modern development. Dig Appleby is a community project designed to circumvent this issue and provide new information about the town's origins and history. The project has been supported by a number of local residents who signed up as project volunteers and offered their gardens as sites for archaeological investigation.



Dig Appleby: first phase dig sites

The first stage of the project saw the excavation of test pits and small trenches within the gardens and green spaces around the 'old' town, primarily focusing upon medieval material still surviving within the former burgages off Boroughgate.



Test Pit 1

The most productive space so far investigated was the garden behind St Annes Hospital. This site occupies four medieval burgages purchased by Lady Anne Clifford in 1661 for the construction of alms-houses and a hospital for the poor. A preliminary geophysical survey, followed by the excavation of two test pits and small trenches revealed crude cobbled yard surfaces, a significant assemblage of medieval pottery, a post-setting which was probably part of a larger structure and the remains of a 19th century outbuilding. Some 147 shards of medieval pottery were recovered, largely comprising cooking pots and jugs. Most of the medieval ceramics appear to be 13th-14th century with a smaller amount of later reduced wares. A wide range of post-medieval ceramics, clay pipes, animal bones, glass and metal objects were also recovered, along with the project's first prehistoric find, a probable Mesolithic blade of grey flint.

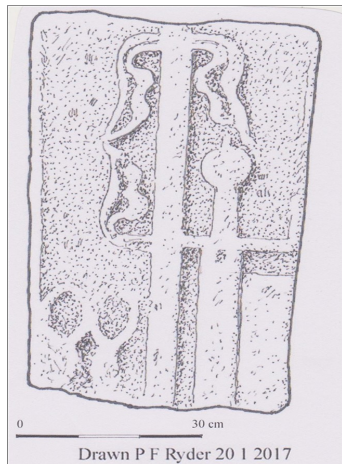


Further test-pit investigations are to be undertaken in 2017 with the final results being presented in a project will lead to some larger-scale investigations and research into other aspects of the town's history. Check digappleby@applebyarchaeology.org.uk if you want to help. *Editors note: a good place to look might be the Jubilee Bridge ford*

Medieval Grave Slab

Carol Dougherty reports that early in the New Year she made an exciting "discovery" in Teesdale. She was invited to go and look at an "interesting stone" found in the corner of a friend of a friend's house. She suspected it might be a medieval cross slab grave cover and immediately contacted an expert. He thought it was 13th century and said that although it was similar to foliate designs found elsewhere in Teesdale, it was not one he

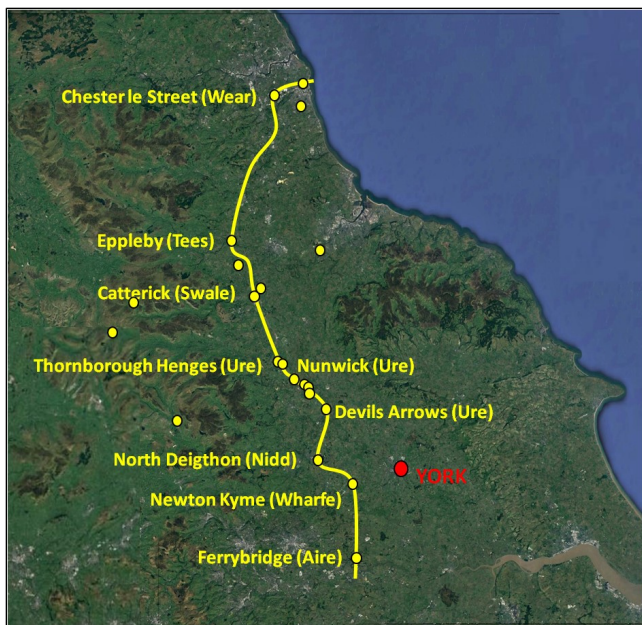
Had seen before. The two oval shapes you can see in the picture are probably scissor handles – a rare symbol.



She persuaded Peter Ryder to come and talk to Appleby Archaeology about cross slab grave covers of Cumbria – should be a fascinating evening *(Drawing provided courtesy of Peter Ryder)*.

The Pre-Historic Origins of the A1

On February 9th, Blaise Vyner entertained members of Appleby Archaeological Society with a talk on the prehistoric origins of the A1. This old "Great North Road" is being gradually upgraded to motorway standard and its history and archaeology is continuously being assessed prior to the start of each construction phase.



The Old North 'Neolithic' Road : river crossings?

There is archaeological evidence suggesting it was a major route way as long ago as the Mesolithic

(10000-8500BC) and Neolithic periods. Using a drainage map of North Yorkshire, Mr Vyner demonstrated that the lowest crossing points of the rivers all appear to be associated with significant Neolithic remains still visible today. Well known Neolithic structures including standing stones, burial mounds, henges and cursus (a long oval enclosed area) are found along the Warfe, Ure, Aire, Nidd and Calder in a rough north-south alignment suggestive of an ancient routeway. Most of the land would have been heavily forested at that time and prone to flooding with deeply braided river channels. Safe crossing places would have been essential for travelling north and south.

Archaeological research carried out in advance of A1 reconstruction has uncovered evidence about the people living along this old route way, associated with sometimes quite spectacular monuments such as Thornborough Henge and the Devils Arrows standing stones, probably used as meeting places, perhaps as markets or places to find a wife or sell a pig. Midden pits have included a variety of food debris including hazelnut shells and broken pots, some quite sophisticated grooved wear dated to c2700BC. Near Catterick a double palisaded enclosure had been found dating back to 2800BC, but perhaps in use for almost 1000 years. A rare example of rock art has also been found at Catterick. As excavations continue they are expected to reveal far more about the Neolithic period (and later) in Yorkshire..

Blaise was thanked by the Phil Rouston and warmly applauded by the audience.

Heather Edwards

Spring Lectures

Excavation, conservation and analysis of a Viking Cemetery at Cumwhitton

Adam Parsons (Oxford Arch North)

Thursday 9th March

In 2007 a Viking oval brooch was found in a field near the small village of Cumwhitton in Northern Cumbria. This led to the discovery of a small Viking age cemetery of pagan graves containing grave goods, the first of its kind in England excavated using modern archaeological techniques

Cumwhitton Cemetery

Reconstruction and interpretation of the objects, burials and environment

Adam Parsons (Oxford Arch North)

Thursday 13th April

Find out more about the reconstruction of the amazing objects the individuals of Cumwhitton were buried with, what this might say about their origins, how they were buried and the region where they were buried in the Viking age.